



National Wildlife Refuge System Summit Update

Wednesday, May 26, 2004

Today's Agenda

- 8 a.m.** Ann Smith, Friends of Black Bayou, Inc.
"A Friend's Perspective"
Robert Byrd Auditorium
- 8:30 a.m.** Move to Breakouts
- 8:45 a.m.** Breakout Three
Instructional Buildings
- 9:45 a.m.** Refreshment Break
- 10:00 a.m.** Return to Breakout Three
- 11:30 a.m.** Lunch and personal business
- 1:30 p.m.** Breakout Four
- 3:45 p.m.** Refreshment Break
Auditorium Lobby
- 4:00 p.m.** Michael Suk, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., White House Fellow to the Department of the Interior
"Refuges and Recreation for a Healthier US"
Robert Byrd Auditorium
- 4:30 p.m.** James Kurth, Deputy Chief, NWRS
"Conservation Leadership for the 21st Century"
Robert Byrd Auditorium
- 5 p.m.** Adjourn

Information Widely Available

Summit Update is also available on the Web at <http://refuges.fws.gov/ConservationSummit/Daily/>. Additionally, a 10-minute video summary and a photo gallery of each day's events are also available on the Web, as are the texts of many of the speeches delivered here.

Measurable Priorities are Summit's Goal

Pointing to America's changing demographics and a national landscape that is being increasingly developed, Refuge System Chief Bill Hartwig yesterday called on summit participants to set measurable outcomes that will keep refuges relevant to communities, yet prevent them from "being loved to death."

Opening the Tuesday session, Hartwig posed three questions as the summit develops a course of action to ensure that "the public receives service for each dollar:"

- What demographic trends should guide the Refuge System?
- What actions can heighten public awareness and support?
- How can refuges serve a more urbanized America, yet fulfill their mission to conserve wildlife and habitats?

"The very health of the Refuge System depends on our ability to build public support," Hartwig declared. "We can't do that unless we invite people to experience their refuges, to volunteer their time, to give of themselves."

Hartwig pointed to the growing number of Hispanic residents and the urbanization of America as issues of paramount importance as the Refuge System plans its future.

"Ultimately, the public will grow to appreciate the world's largest system of lands managed for fish, wildlife, and people," noted Hartwig.

"We have the best employees in America," he continued. "They are smart and dedicated. However, they are



National Wildlife Refuge System Chief Bill Hartwig told the audience that refuge employees manage each acre for "the price of a Big Mac and fries." (Dick Cole/USFWS)

overworked. And our refuge employees manage each acre for the price of a Big Mac and fries. The pressure will increase as Americans' love affair with the outdoors blossoms.

"One tenet guides us: our love for that delicate, ever-evasive balance of life that was supremely crafted – but has to be humanly conserved," Hartwig concluded. "We are dedicated to conserving for all time the species – wild and free, known and sometimes only fleetingly observed – that define us as individuals, as professionals, as links as to generations yet unborn."

--Martha Nudel, Staff Writer

Hunting, Fishing Contribute to Conservation on Refuges

Following Tuesday afternoon breakout sessions, USFWS Deputy Director Matt Hogan, in a well-received address, chronicled the historic and present significance of hunting and fishing in conservation and in the Refuge System.

He noted that 50 new hunting and fishing programs were opened on refuges in the last three years.

Evoking changing times as America grew more industrialized in the 19th century, Hogan said, “The huge increase in urban populations on the heels of industrial growth also brought more demand for food. That marked the beginning of commercial exploitation of wildlife. Conflicts between sport hunters and market hunters were occurring regularly.”

Most notable is the market hunting that aroused Theodore Roosevelt’s attention, leading to protection of tiny Pelican Island in Florida and the Refuge System’s launch 101 years ago.



Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Director Matt Hogan encouraged Summit attendees to “perpetuate our traditions of hunting and fishing.” (Todd Harless/USFWS)

Hogan also cited the roles of sportsmen in passing the 1929 Migratory Bird Act and establishment of the Duck Stamp Program. Now in its 70th year, Duck Stamps have generated proceeds “that have been used to buy over 60 percent of land that the Service has purchased for the Refuge System.”

Hogan noted that the Refuge System offers hunting on 316 of its 544 refuges and fishing opportunities on 275 refuges. For many, the impact has been very personal.

He recalled one participant in a recent disabled hunt sponsored by partner Wheelin Sportsman. “Rich hunted waterfowl for the first time with his 71-year-old father – something neither of them ever expected to do. His dad told us it was a day he and his son would long remember.”

Hogan concluded by asking the audience to “carry out the mandate that we manage the Refuge System for the conservation and restoration of fish, wildlife, and plants, and that we perpetuate our traditions of hunting and fishing and other wildlife-dependent recreation on our wildlife refuges.”

--Ben Ikenson, Staff Writer

Chat on the Bridge

Summit attendees were asked, “What challenges do we face in the Refuge System?”



“How do we integrate the broader aims of the Refuge System with the programs of individual refuges, and align refuge environmental education programs with local school curricula? The question now is how to get greater public support by reaching a broader public.”

Gus Rassam,
Executive Director
American Fisheries Society



“I was one of only two managers in the science team breakout, which was great because a lot of NGOs and others were able to offer their thoughts. Refuges are managed for wildlife first but they are for people too. Science is, of course, critical to our work on refuges, and this should be imparted to our youth.”

Terry Tadano,
Refuge Manager, Seville NWR, NM



“One of the biggest challenges we face is how to manage fish and wildlife habitat with continued development pressures throughout the country. We need to preserve more habitat before it is lost – and the Refuge System is playing a vital role in doing this.”

Karen Mayle,
Virginia ES Field Office Supervisor

Sparrowe Finds Public Divided in Conservation Views



Wildlife Management Institute President Emeritus Rollin Sparrowe addressed the importance of working together for conservation. (Ryan Hagerty/USFWS)

Sparrowe, president emeritus of the Wildlife Management Institute and long-time USFWS employee, who spoke before the summit yesterday. “We’re understanding each other a bit more.”

The cultivation of shared priorities among interest groups of widely differing viewpoints is essential to conservation success, Sparrowe told his audience. “The general public almost never thinks about what we think about day and night. Maybe we’ve got to work at this business a little more,” he noted. “The day-to-day activities of wildlifers these days involves getting other people to do things.”

Citing accomplishments – ranging from the Refuge System Improvement Act to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and farm and transportation bills – Sparrowe identified a single concept for the Refuge System’s future: “learning to channel other people’s money to do the things we

need done, and finding a shared sense of priorities for the Refuge System. You get it in steps.”

Sparrowe singled out the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (“whose goal is to conserve all birds in all habitats – now there’s big thinking, and a ‘big-ticket’ item”) as an opportunity for Refuge System visionaries.

He also pointed to the forward thinking outreach undertaken by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership as an approach that “we need to be doing for the future of refuges.”

Sparrowe received a standing ovation as USFWS Director Steve Williams presented him with statue of Pelican Island refuge manager Paul Kroegel in recognition of his life-long commitment to the Refuge System and wildlife conservation.

--David Klinger, Staff Writer

From his new perspective in the clear, rarified air of Daniel, WY, population 110, Rollin Sparrowe has assessed the condition of conservation in America and pronounced it divided, but good.

“Like politics, conservation is divided in this country, but there’s movement to the center and to developing shared visions,” said

Breakout Sessions Filled with Energy, Healthy Debate

The energy was high and opinions were plentiful as energized delegates to the Conservation in Action Summit ended their first day of breakout sessions yesterday, taking the initial steps to formulating measurable priorities that will guide the Refuge System for the next five to 15 years.

Each of the two breakout sessions focused on one topic area: science, wildlife-dependent recreation, wildlife and habitat and strategic growth. Every summit participant will join a breakout session on each topic before the summit ends Thursday.

The real work began when participants moved into smaller working groups – based on priorities they thought most important. There, groups of 12 or fewer began selecting action items that could constitute the Refuge System’s working agenda for the near future.



Vernon Byrd, supervisory wildlife biologist at Alaska Maritime NWR, discusses wildlife dependent recreation in a breakout session, also attended by national Friends leader Molly Krival.

Breakout (continued from page 3)

Each working group identified no more than three action items, which moved on to the next breakout session for further consideration or addition.

After all breakout sessions conclude Wednesday afternoon, facilitators will develop a ballot of all action items. Summit attendees will be asked to pick five action items for each team during the Wednesday plenary session, as well as the single most important for each team.

The Summit Executive Committee will present voting results Thursday during the Wrap It Up session.

“This is a huge task to do in a short time,” noted Jean Holler. “It’s going to be a challenge to come up with a limited number of actionable items, but I think limiting our recommendations to three forces us to consider what really are the critical issues.”

--Martha Nudel, Staff Writer

Just Married: Love Blossoms on Refuge System

Mingo NWR (MO) Manager Kathleen Maycroft brought more than her dedication to the Refuge System with her to the summit. She brought her new husband, Matthew Burchett.

The couple married on Saturday. They then drove 14 hours to NCTC where, amidst the buzz of breakout sessions and the drone of cicadas, they are enjoying their honeymoon. Congratulations!

--Ben Ikenson, Staff Writer



Ryan Hagerty/USFWS

Zoo Director Explores Common Issues

Inspired by the “brain power” evident at the summit, Dr. Lucy Spelman, director of the National Zoo in Washington, DC, yesterday declared that the Refuge System and the nation’s zoos “have a lot in common.”

Pointing to the need for expanded partnerships, enhanced communications and public education and financial support, Dr. Spelman stressed, “You have the mixture of people who can come up with big ideas in conservation.” During her short, pertinent talk, she highlighted the successful partnership with the Refuge System that brought the Bald Eagle Wildlife Habitat to the National Zoo in July 2003.

--Martha Nudel, Staff Writer



Seniors of the Jefferson High School Cougar Band, Shepherdstown, WV, opened the Conservation in Action Summit Monday. (Ryan Hagerty/USFWS)

Local Band Featured

The 45 seniors who performed the National Anthem Monday are part of the 150-member Jefferson High School Cougar Band, of Shepherdstown, WV. The band won

top honors as the Grand Champion of the All American Music Festival in 2002. Band Director Donnie Showen has led the program for five years.

--Martha Nudel, Staff Writer